

ThinkQuest Competition

Think with us and
you'll be ready.

SkillBuilder

Citations and Reference Lists

This SkillBuilder aligns with the following competition resources:

Rules	Entry Requirements
Tutorial	Lesson 9: Avoid Plagiarism
Guiding Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is all text written in students' own words or quoted properly from cited sources?• Does the entry provide a comprehensive and formatted reference list? <i>Did you conduct sufficient research to support the design of your solution?</i>
Rubric (All Events)	Communication Skills > Citations & Reference List

SkillBuilder Citations and Reference Lists

Pick a Style

After your team selects a problem to solve, conduct research to figure out how others have approached similar problems in the past. Part of this process involves selecting a style guide to use when preparing your entry. A style guide is a set of formats, instructions, and examples that help you present your research to others. Following a style guide helps people who are interested in your problem to locate the same resources with ease. It also explains exactly how to quote others, how to cite all types of sources (e.g., websites, articles, interviews you conduct or read, etc.) and how to prepare a comprehensive reference list. Thus, style guides are essential to helping your team [avoid plagiarism](#).

The ThinkQuest Competition requires you to include a reference list and inline (also known as parenthetical, in-text, or textual) citations in your entry.

- **A reference list** is a complete, formatted list of all sources used in your research and data collection efforts. It is usually located on its own page.
- **Inline citations** are included near or in the same sentence as the content you are attributing to another author or speaker.

A style guide explains how to format both reference lists and citations for every type of source you encounter, as well as for data you collect yourselves. There are many style guides, but it is important to choose one and follow it consistently. Pick one early in the research process, to ensure that you document all of the important details from the sources you gather and the data you collect. Some widely-used style guides are offered by: the [Modern Language Association](#) (MLA), the [American Psychological Association](#) (APA), the [Harvard Guide to Using Sources](#), and [Wikipedia](#). You can purchase a handbook from the authoring organization or find information online for free.



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Once you select a style guide, review some sample research papers prepared using that style guide to understand how the research in your entry should be included. If you do not look at examples of end products in the beginning of the research process, you will not collect all of the important information you need from the sources you use. Remember to use a source tracking tool like [the one at the end of this SkillBuilder](#), in order to keep organized and easily find sources again. You may bookmark websites for this purpose as well, but note that the location and availability of web content can change.

Quote or Link to Sources

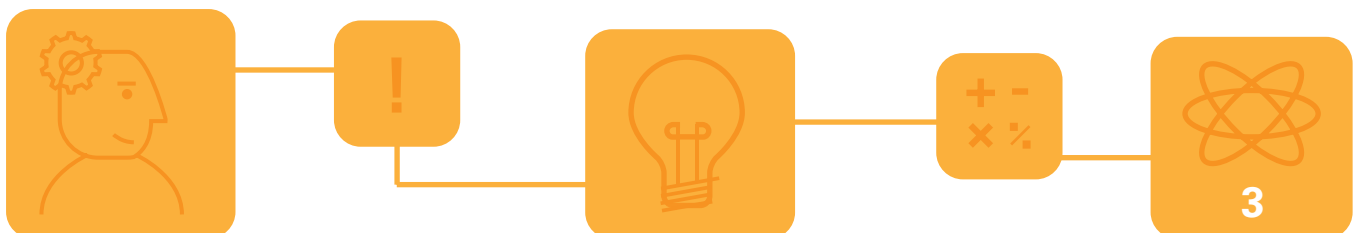
If you can find the same fact in 5 other sources, it is generally accepted information and you do not need to cite it. For example, the speed of light is 299,792,458 meters per second. It is an accepted measurement that most science texts contain, so we do not need to cite a source here. Even if this is the first time you learned that fact, you would not need to cite this SkillBuilder if you wished to reference the speed of light in your entry. However, you do need to acknowledge when you are using some or all of a unique idea, comment, or phrase. Your style guide will tell you exactly how to do this.

In general, any time you restate an exact phrase, you are **quoting** the author or speaker. Use quotations when you really like the way something is stated, and you think it is compelling to share the exact words with your readers. The inline citation and the reference list work together to guide the reader to the correct source:

Example of inline citation in MLA Style: Nationalgeographic.com indicates that “rivers and tributaries are the veins of the planet,” but our team wonders: are humans removing the “lifeblood” too quickly?

Example of corresponding reference list entry in MLA Style:

“Restoring Rivers: The Lifeblood of Communities.” Nationalgeographic.com. National Geographic, n.d.. Web. 26 Aug. 2011.



SkillBuilder Citations and Reference Lists, cont.

If this team were quoting a few different articles from the same website, they should also include the name of the article in the parenthetical (inline) citation.

When you find the perfect video clip, animation, or web page and want to share it with others in your entry, you can **create a hyperlink** directly to the online location. In your entry, state who created the piece and tell the viewer that the link is external.

Example: [Click here](http://planetgreen.discovery.com/videos/g-word-water-desalination.html) to view a video clip from Planet Green explaining how water desalinization can help remove industrial water waste.

<<http://planetgreen.discovery.com/videos/g-word-water-desalination.html>>

Example of corresponding reference list entry in MLA Style:

"G Word: Water Desalinization." Planet Green Videos, 30 June 2008. Online video clip. 26 Aug. 2011.

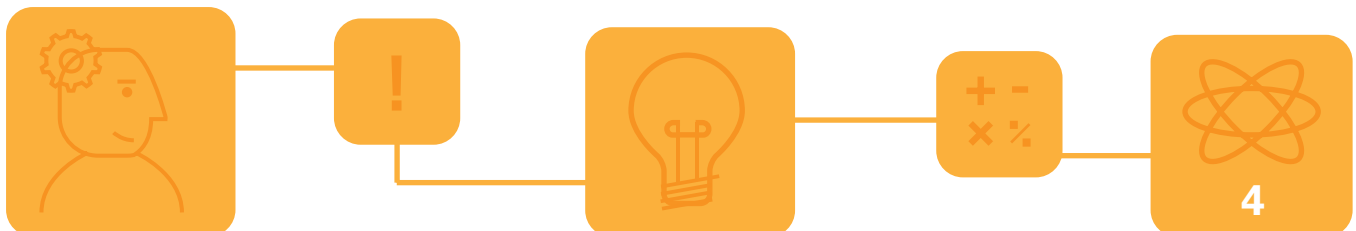
Due to changing web content and broken links, it is not enough to simply create a hyperlink. You must also list the resource in your reference list.

Paraphrase or Summarize Ideas

Sometimes you want to share the idea, but you want to say it in your own words. You still need to use a citation, because you are merely **paraphrasing**, or rewording what someone else has said. It is not really your idea. You may read a long article or chapter and decide that there are one or two central ideas that are relevant to your particular problem-solving process. You will **summarize** the longer piece in a sentence or two, but you still need to use a citation.

Examples: [Click here](http://www.laspositascollege.edu/library/documents/LPCplagiarism_examples.pdf) to see examples of direct quotes, paraphrasing and summarizing, created by the librarians at Las Positas College in Livermore, CA.

<http://www.laspositascollege.edu/library/documents/LPCplagiarism_examples.pdf>



SkillBuilder Citations and Reference Lists, cont.

Make it Your Own

If you are citing other peoples' ideas, how do you make your entry your own? The best entries will:

- **Strike a balance.** In order to solve a problem that is important to you, gather enough background research to show that you realize you are probably not the first people to ever think about this issue. By commenting on how the background information is particularly useful for your team, you balance others' words and ideas with your own.
- **Use inline citations for the most relevant sources.** While you may include many sources in your reference list, it is not necessary to cite each and every one in your entry. Present only those that help you make a compelling case for your solution. Readers can tell whether you have been thoughtful about what you included, or whether you have cited every reference without making good connections among them. The latter is not desirable.
- **Compare and contrast.** There are often two or more sides to an issue, which is why many problems have not been solved. By explaining these different perspectives to your reader, you contextualize the problem, your target audience, and your proposed solution.
- **Explain your unique contribution.** By reviewing past and current solutions to problems we care about, we learn how we can contribute to and improve these practices. Be sure to explain how your solution is unique. Did you develop a new method? Are you addressing a different target audience? Are you approaching the problem from a different angle or perspective? Make sure your reader understands.



SkillBuilder Citations and Reference Lists, cont.

For More Information

There are many good resources that can show you how to create citations and reference lists. Here are some we have identified for you:

- [The MLA handbook for Writers of Research Papers](#) – official website & store
- [Library Quick Guide for MLA](#) – handy, short document
- [Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association \(APA\)](#) – official website & store
- [The Chicago Manual of Style](#) – official website & store
- [Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing](#) – from Purdue's Online Writing Lab (OWL)
- [A Writer's Reference](#) – sample papers and other helpful tips from Diana Hacker of Bedford/St. Martin's

Other SkillBuilders

- [Avoid Plagiarism](#)



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Source Tracking Worksheet

This worksheet is a more detailed version of the Source Tracking Worksheet from Lesson 8 of the Roadmap to Success Tutorial. Fill out the applicable parts of the worksheet for each source you find. If you use the information you gather in your entry, you will need all of this information in order to create quotations, citations and a formatted reference list. An example is provided.

When in doubt, refer to a specific Style Guide to make sure you are capturing all of the citation information needed for a particular type of source.

Example:

Full Name of Author (or organization, inventor, illustrator, photographer, composer, speaker, etc.)	Type of Source (e.g., book, blog post, interview, video, etc.)	Date Published or Recorded	Date You Retrieved the Information	Full URL for Internet Sources (the url that links directly to the pages you read/heard; include more than one URL if necessary)	Other Publication Information (publisher/organization, issue/volume, city/country)
Fred Pearce	Book	2007	October 12, 2011	Fred Pearce also has written articles for New Scientist: www.newscientist.com	Boston: Beacon Press



SkillBuilder Citations and Reference Lists, cont.

Topic or Category Related to Your Team's Problem	Direct Quotations	Page Numbers & Titles (include chapters or sections)	Your Own Notes and Thoughts
Local human impact and water use; Local government, laws and business regulations	"Nothing, perhaps not even climate change, will matter more to humanity's future on this planet over the next century than the fate of our rivers."	p.XI	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tony Allan of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London invented the term "virtual water" to mean all of the water that is used to grow food and make things (p.5).• There are great statistics on 30 countries and their water use, in addition to the major rivers. A good place to look to support our solution to reduce pollution in and water consumption from our local river.



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Source Tracking Worksheet

Full Name of Author (or organization, inventor, illustrator, photographer, composer, speaker, etc.)	Type of Source (e.g., book, blog post, interview, video, etc.)	Date Published or Recorded	Date You Retrieved the Information	Full URL for Internet Sources (the url that links directly to the pages you read/heard; include more than one URL if necessary)	Other Publication Information (publisher/organization, issue/volume, city/country)

Topic or Category Related to Your Team's Problem	Direct Quotations	Page Numbers & Titles (include chapters or sections)	Your Own Notes and Thoughts

